



Office of Management's Monthly Newsletter

The Beacon

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
Office of Management
Ronald Hicks, Deputy Administrator

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bea- con (bê' ken) *noun*

A signaling or guiding device, such as a lighthouse, located on a coast. A source of guidance or

RON'S CORNER

Communication

by Ron Hicks, Deputy Administrator
Office of Management

As promised in the previous edition of the *Beacon*, beginning this month we have expanded our coverage of the changes to the FSIS workforce as we move toward the food safety system of the 21st century. I recently attended several listening sessions in the field that gave me an appreciation for your need for more information on our transition.

In the Workforce of the Future column of the *Beacon*, you'll see an update on our progress toward implementing the Consumer Safety Officer series in FSIS. Workforce of the Future articles have been appearing in the *Beacon* since September 1999.

In addition, Attachment 1 to this issue of the *Beacon* is the memorandum signed by Administrator Tom Billy providing an update on the HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project (HIMP).

Communication, by definition, is a two way street. Therefore, we are soliciting your evaluation of the material published in the *Beacon* each month. Attachment 2 is your opportunity to influence the quantity and type of information you will see in this newsletter. Simply complete the survey, fold and tape it, and

return it using the postage-paid self-mailer. Your comments are invaluable to us as we strive to make the *Beacon* an even more useful tool for you.

WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

Update on Introducing the Consumer Safety Officer Occupation

by: Yvonne Davis, Chair
Workforce of the Future Steering Committee
Telephone: 202-720-4827

Many of you have asked about the status of the Consumer Safety Officer (CSO) initiative and what employees can do to qualify for this new occupation. This article provides an update on the Agency CSO implementation plan. The article also outlines educational requirements for the series and describes how the agency will assist employees who wish to become CSOs.

Implementation Plan and Current Status

In June 2000, the Agency sent a revised proposal to the National Joint Council on the introduction and use of the GS-696 (CSO) series. The original proposal, presented to the NJC in June 1999, had been withdrawn to provide time to address congressional interest and concerns related to the initiative.

The Agency goal for implementing the GS-696 series, as described in its February 15, 2000 report to Congress, is to announce and fill internally 50 positions this fiscal year. (In May, Administrator Tom Billy sent the report and a letter to all employees.) To avoid relocation costs, which were of major concern to the Congress, FSIS plans to announce the CSO positions in local commuting areas in which there are a sufficient number of potential applicants. Any FSIS employee who lives within commuting distance would be eligible to apply.

The Agency believes that another 50 to 75 positions could be announced and filled in FY 2001, from internal candidates, with no new funding. In FY 2002, baseline resources would have to be augmented to increase CSO hiring. The current Agency thinking for FY 2002 is to announce another 300 CSO positions -- filling at least 200 of those positions internally, from permanent employees who now qualify or will have acquired the qualifications.

Specific locations for establishing and advertising CSO assignments

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this fiscal year are currently under consideration. Throughout the planning and implementation phases, the Agency has committed to keeping employees, the bargaining unit and employee associations well informed and to meeting all its statutory obligations. Also, FSIS will address any additional questions about the initiative from the Congress and other interested parties.

How the Agency Can Assist Interested Employees

A subgroup of the Workforce of the Future Steering Committee and staff within the Human Resources Division are developing a method for identifying field employees who (1) meet the educational qualifications for the CSO series or (2) are working towards obtaining qualifying education. The method that is being considered is to ask employees to submit transcripts or course slips of completed college education for review for CSO qualifications determination. In return, they will receive confirmation that indicates whether or not they meet the educational requirements, or the number of semester hours they have of qualifying education.

The immediate need is to obtain information on potential applicants, located within the field, for CSO positions. We are working cooperatively with FO managers, the NJC, and other employee organizations to have this process in place by the end of the summer. Similar surveys to identify education or special certifications of other Agency employees are being considered under separate initiatives.

We are gratified by the substantial number of employees who are working toward the minimum 30 semester-hour/45-quarter-hour requirement for entry into the CSO series or are taking other job-related college-level coursework. It is clear that many FSIS employees are

willing to invest their time to prepare for the workforce of the future. Many employees have been reimbursed for the cost of these classes through the FO Continuing Education Program (CEP), and additional funding was authorized twice during this fiscal year.

To qualify for reimbursement, employees must obtain prior approval. CEP funds for the remainder of FY 2000 are nearly gone, so interested employees should submit their requests as soon as possible. Specific course information should be provided to Carolyn Woolfolk by e-mail, by phone at 202-720-6313 or by fax at 202-720-6050.

The Food Safety Education Program (FSEP), offered by Texas A&M University in College Station, is another means by which inspectors can work toward the CSO educational requirement of 30 college semester hours of science. The FSEP curriculum, which covers food safety and public health fundamentals and concepts, confers 5 semester hours of creditable coursework. (Further information on the FSEP application and nomination process will be forthcoming in a future edition of the *Beacon*). Texas A&M also offers the Supervisory Education Program (SEP) which confers 4 semester hours of CSO qualifying coursework.

CSO Qualifying College Coursework

The following types of college-level courses are qualifying for the CSO series and are funded under the CEP. (Not all courses funded under the CEP are qualifying for the CSO series.)

- Animal science (Animal Husbandry)
- Biology/biological science/genetics
- Chemistry
- Dairy science
- Related Engineering fields (Agricultural engineering,

chemical engineering, food engineering, bioengineering)

- Epidemiology
- Enology
- Environmental science (including sanitation)
- Food science/technology (including coursework in the areas of food marketing and food law)
- Food Systems
- Microbiology (virology, bacteriology, parasitology)
- Nutrition
- Pathology
- Pharmacology
- Physics (a maximum of 10 semester hours)
- Physiology/Human Anatomy
- Poultry science/industry
- Public Health science
- Statistics (a maximum of 8 semester hours)
- Veterinary medicine
- Zoology

VDIP

Intervention Update

by Milo Christianson

Telephone: 612-370-2000

Kathy Welsh

Telephone: 202-720-5657

Labor and Employee Relations Division

Several months have passed since we updated you on our intervention efforts through the Voluntary Dispute Intervention Program (VDIP). Therefore, we decided to use this month's article to do so.

VDIP began in March 1998. At that time, we only offered voluntary mediation services. As you may recall, mediation is an informal process in which an impartial third party assists two or more individuals in finding a mutually acceptable solution to their conflict. Since VDIP began, we have conducted 48 mediations, including several in other Federal agencies. Our resolution rate for mediations is 82%. A resolution rate of 70% is

typically indicative of a successful mediation program.

During the second year of VDIP, we added additional services. Some of the services such as conciliation are voluntary. Others, such as team problem solving, fact-finding and facilitation, are required rather than voluntary. An explanation of these additional services follows:

Team Problem Solving (TPS) – This is a facilitated multi-party process involving several employees at the same or various grade levels working together to solve a problem. TPS has been used successfully in Field Operations for a number of years. Recently, several requests for TPS were initiated through VDIP. Our VDIP mediators have led or participated in three TPS sessions. All three resulted in action plans that have been implemented.

Facilitation – This is a process that helps parties reach a decision or a satisfactory resolution of a matter. A facilitator, who is a neutral participant, generally helps to conduct meetings or coordinate discussions among participants at a meeting. We have facilitated five such meetings through VDIP.

Conciliation – This is a process in which a neutral third party tries to bring the disputants to an agreement by lowering tensions, improving communications, interpreting issues, and providing technical advice. We have conducted four conciliation sessions and are conducting one for another USDA agency this month.

Fact-Finding – This is a process whereby a neutral third party gathers preliminary information in an effort to determine what additional Alternative Dispute Resolution method(s) such as mediation, could help correct a problem or issue. We have conducted one fact-finding session.

During the last few months VDIP, in conjunction with the Organization and Employee Development Branch of the Human Resources Division and the Training Center, also completed the development of a one-day Conflict Management Workshop. This workshop was formally announced on April 28, 2000. Since that announcement we have conducted four field workshops in Des Moines (2), Pickerington and Salem. Three additional workshops in the Chicago, Minneapolis and Atlanta Districts are scheduled.

The Conflict Management Workshop covers such topics as the Nature of Conflict, Conflict Resolution Styles, Active Listening, and Conflict Resolution. The workshops can be scheduled by contacting Robert Zimmerman of the Organization and Employee Development Branch at 202-720-4937. Our emphasis through the end of the fiscal year will be on providing these workshops to our supervisory and managerial personnel in the field.

If you would like to learn more about the services offered through VDIP, you can call 1-800-860-VDIP (8347), our toll free line, or one of our two commercial lines, 612-370-2033 (Minneapolis) or 202-205-0066 (Washington, DC.).

Have a wonderful summer!

HUMAN RESOURCES

You Are Our Customers

Every first-line employee in the Agency is familiar with the concept and realities of providing service to our industry customers every day. In the Human Resources Division, Office of Management, the first-line employee is our customer, along with other FSIS employees we serve across all segments of the Agency.

We in the Human Resources (HR) Division are reinventing our service

pledge to the employees of FSIS. We are in the process of developing a customer service plan that will not only include our customer service philosophies and goals, but will identify specific standards you should expect us to achieve when we provide HR services. We will be asking you for your input along the way as we formulate our customer service standards. Later, we will publicize them and ask for your input on how we're doing in relation to the goals and standards contained in the plan.

To tackle this project, we are convening a team of HR employees, and will be including program administrative personnel and others we deal with frequently, in order to identify key services and develop meaningful standards. We will first identify and prioritize the services that HRD provides. During this step, it will be important to get as much customer input as possible. We are asking for any comments or suggestions regarding the services that the Human Resources Division provides or anything else to offer that would help us serve you better as we formulate our customer service standards. Bargaining Unit employees should send any comments to their NJC Council President. All others should forward comments by email to nancy.russell@usda.gov or by regular mail to Nancy Russell, Performance, Evaluation and Recognition Branch, Room 3817 South Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC, 20250-3700. We appreciate your input into the enhancement of our services.

Retirement

by Benefits and Workers Compensation Section
Telephone: 800-370-3747

The goal we've worked toward our entire career. It's an exciting and yet an apprehensive time in our life. It's not too different from our first "real" date or car or job. Legislation

over the last 10 years has dramatically altered and complicated the benefits related to retirement. In order to enjoy it fully, you should be as informed as soon as possible on what to expect. The Human Resources Field Office in Minneapolis, Minnesota (800-370-3747 or 1-800-370-3747) is ready to aid you in this transitional phase of your life. Give us a call - your future is our present.

U.S. Savings Bonds

by Pay and Leave Section
Telephone: 800-370-3747 and
Performance, Evaluation and
Recognition Branch, HQ HRD

When you file a change of address (AD-349), it will NOT change your savings bond address. This change should be made by completing an Authorization for Purchase and Request for Change, United States Savings Bonds, Series EE and Series I, SB-2253. Check with your supervisor for these bond cards or you may also request, through channels, from your administrative office or your Savings Bond Keyworker for your organization. Completed forms are to be directed to the Servicing Personnel Office for processing (Human Resources Field Office in Minneapolis for field employees, and Employment Services and Policy Branch in Washington, DC for headquarters employees.)

Note: The USDA Savings Bond Campaign is underway as we go to press. If you haven't had a chance yet to sign up for Series EE Bonds or the Series I Bonds, it's not too late. Complete your bond card now and save money the easy and safe way for that special education fund or even a large purchase you are contemplating in the future. If you have any questions on the Savings Bonds, contact the Savings Bond representative for your organization or check out the savings bond web site on www.savingsbonds.gov. If you have questions after checking these resources, contact Anna

Pierce, the Assistant Agency Savings Bond Coordinator in the Performance Evaluation and Recognition Branch by e-mail or on 202-720-7983.

Progress Reviews

by Human Resources Field Office
Telephone: 800-370-3747

As a part of the performance appraisal process, ALL supervisors are required to conduct periodic reviews during the appraisal cycle. Reviews for the following groups of employees will need to be performed:

M-Z Bargaining Unit Employees:

According to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article XXI, Section B, periodic reviews between a bargaining unit employee and the rating supervisor shall take place every 4 months during the appraisal period. One of these reviews shall also coincide with the discussion of the annual performance rating. Therefore, for M-Z employees, grades 1-12, the first 4-month progress review must be completed by September 1.

In conducting these reviews, refer to the progress review checklist in any User's Guide for specific points to cover in the discussion with the employee. Employee and supervisor should initial and date block 16 of the FSIS 4430-5 form to certify completion of the progress review discussion.

A-L Non-Bargaining Unit Employees:

For non-bargaining unit employees, supervisors should conduct progress reviews within 5-7 months of the beginning of the appraisal cycle. Therefore, for A-L employees, progress reviews must be completed 30 days before or after September 1.

Responding to Vacancy Announcements

by Human Resources Field Office
Telephone: 800-370-3747

A well-written application form is a crucial part of a successful job search. But no matter how well written, applications are not referred to the selecting official unless all eligibility requirements are met. Employees are reminded that it is the applicant's responsibility to submit all required documents, as outlined in the vacancy announcement. To assure fairness for all who respond to a vacancy announcement, incomplete or late applications for promotion receive no further consideration.

Remember to respond to all job elements in the vacancy announcement, with no more than two one-sided pages per element, using a legible print size. Print should be no smaller than a "10-point" font on a computer printer or 12 characters per inch on the typewriter. In short, applicants must carefully follow all instructions listed in the vacancy announcement. By doing so, employees are more likely to successfully navigate their chosen career path.

Food Inspector Intermittents Seeking Full-Time Employment

by HR Systems Section
Telephone: 800-370-3747

The full-time Food Inspector (FI) Register is administered by the HR Systems Section in the Human Resources Field Office (HRFO) in Minneapolis, MN. Although this Section works for FSIS, they perform the work of a different Federal agency, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). In doing so, it is required to operate under OPM rules and regulations. These rules and regulations may, at times, cause confusion as to applicant responsibility. The Systems Section welcomes the opportunity to explain some of these responsibilities in more detail.

Following are several questions (Q) and answers (A) that relate to intermittent (WAE) FI's who seek full-time employment:

Q: I am currently employed as a FI, GS-5 on an intermittent (WAE) tour of duty. I am scheduled to take the FI test soon. If I pass the test, how do I get on the GS-7 Register after I am promoted to GS-7?

A: If your application to take the FI test reflected that you are a FI, GS-5 on an intermittent (WAE) tour of duty, and you pass the FI test you will be sent a Notice of Results informing you of your test score, AND a letter with a questionnaire attached. The letter is provided as a courtesy, and details the specific steps YOU MUST TAKE to receive a rating at the GS-7 level to be placed on the GS-7 Register. You cannot receive consideration for full-time FI, GS-7 jobs unless you are on the GS-7 Register. It is vitally important that upon being promoted to GS-7 you complete the questionnaire by very carefully following the instructions, and submit it to the Systems Section for evaluation and rating. Upon completion of the rating you will be sent a new Notice of Results reflecting your GS-7 rating. Your rating at the GS-7 level may be lower than your rating at the GS-5. Keep in mind that your GS-5 rating is based strictly on your test score and any additional points that may have been added due to veteran's preference. Your GS-7 rating is based strictly on the information YOU PROVIDED on your GS-7 questionnaire or application. As of the date on the Notice of Results, you will be eligible for consideration at the GS-7 level.

Note: If your application to take the FI test did not reflect that you are a FI, GS-5 on an intermittent (WAE) tour of duty, the answer to the next question applies to your situation too.

Q: I am currently employed as a FI, GS-5 on an intermittent (WAE) tour of duty. I was hired after I took and passed the FI test. I am on the GS-5 Register. How do I get on the GS-7 Register after I am promoted to GS-7?

A: To be placed on the GS-7 Register YOU MUST request a GS-7 questionnaire (1-800-370-3747), OR submit an application with very detailed information about the duties you perform at the GS-5 level, and a request for a GS-7 rating. If you request a questionnaire, follow the instructions very carefully, and return it to the Systems Section for evaluation and rating. Upon completion of the rating you will be sent a new Notice of Results reflecting your GS-7 rating. Your rating at the GS-7 level may be lower than your rating at the GS-5. Keep in mind that your GS-5 rating is based strictly on your test score and any additional points that may have been added due to veteran's preference. Your GS-7 rating is based strictly on the information *you provided* on your GS-7 questionnaire or application. As of the date on the Notice of Results, you will be eligible for consideration at the GS-7 level.

Q: I am currently employed as a FI, GS-5, on an intermittent (WAE) tour of duty. I have applied to the full-time Register, and have received a letter advising me that my application has been reviewed, and I will be scheduled to take the FI test. What is the date, and specific location of the test?

A: The FSIS has a contract with the OPM to administer, and score the written FI test. OPM will establish the actual test date, and advise you, in writing, approximately two weeks before the test, of the date, and specific location. At that time, they will also provide you with sample questions, and forms you need to complete, and bring with you to the test.

Q: I am currently employed as a FI, GS-7 on an intermittent (WAE) tour of duty. I've passed the FI test, completed a questionnaire and received notice that I am now eligible at the GS-7 level. Will I be considered at both the GS-5 and GS-7 levels for full-time permanent positions?

A: The vast majority of conversions to full-time permanent positions are at a person's current grade level. But, yes, unless you indicate otherwise, you will be considered at both grade levels. This may increase your chances to be selected. If you accept a position offer at the GS-5 level, however, regulations require individuals that you stay in your position for 90 days before you would be eligible for promotion to the GS-7 level. Even given this downside, most WAE's choose to be considered at both grade levels, weighing any position offers they might receive on a case by case basis.

Q: I have taken and passed the FI test. How long before I will be selected for a full-time job?

A: We are unable to predict a specific period of time before selection. When a vacancy is approved to be filled a request is submitted to the Human Resources Field Office (HRFO). The HR Systems Section issues a list of names based on OPM rules and regulations. Names are referred based on your test score and veteran's preference and how your test score and veteran's preference compare to other eligibles that have indicated an interest in the geographical zone in which the vacancy exists. Selection is made from this list of names in accordance with OPM rules and regulations. More specifically, selection must be made from the top three interested eligibles, and a non-veteran cannot be selected before a veteran with a higher score. These rules and regulations apply even if you are currently

employed by FSIS as a FI on an intermittent (WAE) tour of duty.

If you have questions regarding any of the Registers (new or full-time employment consideration only) administered by the Systems Section (FI full-time, FI intermittent, and VMO), please feel free to contact us at 1-800-370-3747.

Requests for Employment Verification

*by Human Resources Field Office
Telephone: 800-370-3747*

Field employees are reminded that all requests for employment verification are to be forwarded to the Human Resources Field Office in Minneapolis, MN, for uniform completion. These forms are completed based on information from the employee's official personnel folder. To expedite processing of these requests, employees should furnish the following address to requestors:

USDA, FSIS
Human Resources Field Office
Butler Square West, 4th Floor
100 North Sixth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Turnaround time is delayed when requests are directed to supervisors, establishments, district offices, or Washington, DC, since they must then be forwarded to HRFO for completion.

Orientation Handbook

*by Human Resources Field Office
Telephone: 800-370-3747*

Human Resources Office in Washington, DC, and Minneapolis, MN, provide all new employees with an Employee Resource Handbook containing basic policy and procedural information to help the new member of the FSIS team become acclimated with the organization and their new position. Additional individual copies of these handbooks may be requested from the appropriate Human Resources

Office (202-720-6617 for headquarters employees, and the number above for field employees).

Designation Of Beneficiary Alert!

*by Benefits and Workers
Compensation Section
Telephone: 800-370-3747*

Are you sure your designation of beneficiary forms are up to date? Maybe when you started to work for the Government you weren't married and names your parents as beneficiaries. Or since you've been a government employee you've divorced and remarried. The hardest thing a Benefits Specialist has to do is tell someone's survivors that they are not designated to get the Federal Benefits (life insurance, unpaid salary and annual leave, the Thrift Savings Plan, and/or retirement monies). Don't let this happen; keep your designation of beneficiary forms current. If you have not filed designation forms, your benefits will be distributed by the following order of precedence:

1. To your widow or widower
2. If none, to your children equally and descendants of deceased children by representation
3. If none, to your parents
4. If none, to the appointed executor or administrator of your estate
5. If none, to your next of kin who is entitled to your estate under the laws of the state in which you resided.

If you once filled out a designation of beneficiary form but now desire to have your benefits distributed by the order of precedence listed above, send new forms to your Human Resources Office indicating "Cancel Prior Designations".

If you have questions or would like new designation of beneficiary forms, contact your Human Resources Office in Washington, DC (Headquarters employees) or Minneapolis, MN (field employees) for assistance.

Benefits Questions

*by Benefits and Workers
Compensation Section
Telephone: 800-370-3747*

You can now direct your benefits questions by simply sending an e-mail message addressed to Benefits Questions. Submitting your inquiries via e-mail ensures a quick response and avoids the delays that result from telephone or letter correspondence.

Health Insurance Coverage For Son Or Daughter Turning Age 22

*by Benefits and Workers
Compensation Section
Telephone: 800-370-3747*

Do you have family coverage on your health insurance and a son or daughter who will soon turn age 22??? If you notify your Human Resources Office (HRD- for Headquarters employees; HRFO, Minneapolis – for Field employees) within 60 days of their 22 birthday, they can continue in the Federal health insurance program for up to three years. This will be individual coverage for that son or daughter (not part of your family plan) and the cost will be the full premium (employee plus Government share) plus a 2% administrative charge. They can choose to stay in the plan in which they are currently covered or they may choose any Federal plan that covers their geographical area. So if you have a dependent approaching age 22, contact your Personnel Office and ask about the Temporary Continuation of Coverage for the health insurance program.

FSIS Personnel Fax Request Service

A "fax on demand" service is available through the HRD's Human Resources Field Office to provide employees, offices, and members of the public with personnel forms, documents, and other printed information, by fax. The Personnel Fax Request Service provides

automated access to over 70 documents, including all field and headquarters vacancy announcements, all forms needed to apply for entry-level Food Inspector and VMO jobs, an HRFO phone directory, and many FSIS, SF, OF, and other forms. The Personnel Fax Request Service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can be reached by calling 1-800-370-3747 and entering 2002.

The first step in obtaining documents from the Service is to obtain the index listing of all documents currently available. This listing shows the name of each document, the number of pages, and the index number needed to retrieve it from the Service. The index listing can be obtained by calling the Fax Request Service and following the voice prompts to have a copy of the index sent to the caller's fax machine. The index listing can also be obtained from the HRD Internet web site, at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/om/hrd/empty_career/fax.htm, in Adobe Acrobat Reader (.pdf) format. The index listing is updated every Tuesday to include all new vacancy announcements

The final step is to identify the index numbers of the desired announcements or documents, call the Service back, and follow the voice prompts to have those documents faxed out. The Personnel Fax Request Service allows callers to receive up to three documents per call.

Employees who do not have access to a fax can continue to obtain information about available forms or copies of forms by contacting the Human Resources Field Office at 1-800-370-3747.

Leave Transfer Recipients

1. Jackie Copeland
OFO, DC; Illness
2. Annie Stewart
POB, MN; Serious Illness

3. Linda Cole
OPPDE, DC; Serious Illness
4. Sonya West
OPPDE, DC; Maternity
5. Joyce Schultz
POB, MN; Serious Illness
6. Stephanie Showell
OFO, DE; Family Illness
7. Linda Carey
EMS, DC; Surgery
8. Nancy Clyburn
OPHS, DC; Surgery
9. George Olson
OFO, MN; Family Illness
10. Marilyn Weber
FPC, IA; Illness
11. Robert Martz
OFO, IA; Serious Illness
12. Betty Morgan
OFO, AR; Family Illness
13. Carolyn Woolfolk
OFO, DC; Surgery
14. OFO-99-0027
OFO, NC; Surgery
15. Theresa Spoering
OFO, MN; Surgery
16. Tammy Love
OFO, AR; Surgery
17. Sue Engels
OFO, IA; Family Illness
18. Nicole Wareham
OFO, IN; Maternity
19. Michelle Long
OM, DC; Surgery
20. Angela Cuello
OFO, TX; Serious Illness
21. Mona Eder
OFO, IL; Maternity
22. Aurbrey Tribble
OFO, FL; Serious Illness
23. Jacqueline Bonner
OFO, AL; Surgery
24. Denise Bassell
FPC, IA; Illness
25. John French
OFO, GA; Family Illness
26. Victor Varnadoe
OFO, OH; Family Illness
27. OFO-99-0049
OFO, MA; Surgery
28. Tommie Olson
OFO, NE; Surgery
29. Clement Grangier
OFO, MD; Serious Illness
30. OFO-99-0047
OFO, IA; Surgery
31. Mark Spear
OFO, AL; Surgery

32. Dunita Harris
OFO, TX; Maternity
33. James Layman
OFO, OH; Serious Illness
34. Karen Wesson
OFO, DC; Surgery
35. Brandy Blevins
OFO, CA; Serious Illness
36. Vandora Hampton
OFO, VA; Serious Illness
37. OFO-00-0006
OFO, AL; Illness
38. Madge Stone
OFO, DC; Family Illness
39. Carmen Torrent
FSE, DC; Illness
40. OFO-00-0007
OFO, AL; Surgery
41. Jamie Zysset
FO, KS; Maternity
42. OFO-00-0010
OFO, GA
43. Gordon Jones
OFO, TN; Serious Illness
44. Randy Haggard
OFO, TX; Serious Illness
45. Vickie Allen
OFO, CA; Serious Illness
46. OFO-AL-0013
OFO, AL; Serious Illness
47. John Buscemi
OM, DC; Surgery
48. Andy Sandoval
OFO, TX; Serious Illness
49. Robert Butler
OFO, MS; Surgery
50. Ralph Bowen
OFO, NE; Serious Illness
51. Deana Hall
OFO, AR; Maternity
52. Judith Terry
OFO, AL; Serious Illness
53. OFO-00-0022
OFO, MI; Serious Illness

*While not consenting to the publication of their names, certain LTP recipients are assigned a number that they may provide to their co-workers if they choose so that donated leave may be transferred to their account. Any questions on the LTP should be referred to the Human Resources Field Office on 1-800-370-3747 for field employees and to the Classification and Compensation Branch for HQ employees on 202-

720-6287.

May/June Retirements

Frank R. Aim, Jr., Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, West Columbia, SC 05/27/00, 31 Years

John P. Billig, Jr., Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Trenton, NJ, 06/03/00, 30 Years

Leroy R. Christensen, Food Inspector (S), OFO, Omaha, NE, 05/20/00, 31 Years

Carl W. Conrad, Mail Clerk, OM, Minneapolis, MN, 06/02/00, 35 Years

Ossie B. Culpepper, SVMO, OFO, Attalla, AL, 05/31/00, 12 Years

Edward W. Grant, SVMO, OFO, Dillon, SC, 05/31/00, 15 Years

William E. Gorby, Food Inspector, OFO, DuBois, PA, 05/31/00, 25 Years

Norman L. Harris, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Salina, UT, 06/03/00, 34 Years

Kelvin R. Hathcote, Food Inspector, OFO, Blountsville, AL, 05/20/00, 7 Years

Timothy C. Jamar, Food Inspector, OFO, Green Forest, AR, 05/20/00, 11 Years

Ronald E. Johnston, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Belle Plaine, MN, 06/03/00, 37 Years

Bobby J. King, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Farmerville, LA, 05/31/00, 32 Years

David L. King, Food Inspector, OFO, Ft. Wayne, IN, 06/03/00, 34 Years

Willard K. Ledbetter, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Gainesville, GA, 06/02/00, 37 Years

Linda J. Loucks, Food Inspector, OFO, Nampa, ID, 05/06/00, 12 Years

Alvaro Luna, SVMO, OFO, Richlandtown, PA, 05/20/00, 13 Years

Thomas F. McCann, Food Inspector, OFO, Philadelphia, PA, 06/02/00, 30 Years

Robert P. McNeill, Food Inspector, OFO, Bowling Green, MO, 06/03/00, 24 Years

Thomas J. O'Malley, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Boston, MA, 06/03/00, 38 Years

Glenda S. Page, Lead Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Batesville, AR, 06/02/00, 30 Years

John A. Pirelli, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Phoenix, AZ, 06/02/00, 33 Years

Paul P. Prislupsky, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Olyphant, PA, 06/03/00, 32 Years

Manuel J. Rodriguez, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Marina, CA, 06/03/00, 28 Years

Max R. Russell, VMO, OFO, Dodge City, KS, 05/31/00, 11 Years

Leonidas N. Seldera, SVMO, OFO, Omaha, NE, 06/03/00, 32 Years

David A. Sherman, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Chicopee, MA, 06/02/00, 35 Years

Vester L. Swopes, Food Inspector, OFO, Springdale, AR, 05/27/00, 41 Years

Betty H. Talley, Food Inspector, OFO, Dardanelle, AR, 06/02/00, 30 Years

Robert L. Thibeau, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Boston, MA, 06/03/00, 33 Years

Manuel Valdez, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, San Antonio, TX, 06/01/00, 32 Years

Larkin L. Van Den Heuvel, Food Inspector, OFO, Ottumwa, IA, 06/03/00, 30 Years

Jerry L. Voges, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Alcester, SD, 06/02/00, 31 Years

James E. Walker, Consumer Safety Inspector, OFO, Colorado Springs, CO, 06/02/00, 27 Years

SUPPLIES

Status on the Relocation of the Landover Service Center

by Pete Bridgeman

*Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4222*

The move of the Landover Service Center to Beltsville is still being planned, but is now projected to occur at the end of November of this year. In conjunction with the move

to Beltsville, we plan to reissue an updated version of the supply catalog to the field. The most recent version is the April, 1998 edition (FSIS-CAT-001), along with the August, 1999 Addendum (FSIS-CAT-ADD1). If you are still using an older version of the catalog, you should replace it with these. We will update the Addendum to reflect any changes within the past year and make it available next month, under the same item number, FSIS-CAT-ADD1.

We have made a decision to stay with the Office of Operations for the handling of our Field Supply System. They have made a number of improvements over the past couple of months, correcting many of the problems that occurred when they converted to their new system. Our customers should be seeing a marked improvement in turn-around times, now. Orders are actually being filled in a more timely manner than ever. Most orders get filled and sent back out the next day after they are received. There were still a few kinks in the new system in the filling of back-orders, but these have finally been worked out, and backorders are now being filled on a daily basis, as the backordered items come in to stock. They have developed electronic ordering capability in their new system which will soon be available to anyone with internet access. We are working with FAIM, and plan to consult with the NJC in the near future, to develop procedures for FAIM users to begin ordering electronically, as well. We are also going to continue to pursue development of a more efficient means of delivering office-type supplies to the field. FSIS' overhead costs associated with the Landover Service Center will decrease significantly in Fiscal Year 2001, as a result of their projected move to Beltsville.

While we realize this year has been a difficult one for our customers, we're confident that you should begin to see a vast improvement in

the field supply system, and as always, welcome your input and feedback on how we're doing, and how we can continue to improve the system to meet your needs. While we won't always be able to implement every suggested improvement you submit, we will always take a good look at your ideas and use those that we can.

Band-aids - Correction, and a New Item

It has come to our attention that the 1" x 3" Band-aids (FSIS-52) being issued from Landover recently were not the same quality (flexible fabric) that we were previously stocking. Apparently, GSA began to send us Plastic Band-aids instead of the Flexible Fabric type on our orders - this has been corrected, and we now have the Flexible Fabric style in stock again. We apologize for this error.

It was also brought to our attention that more knuckle type band-aids are needed as a replacement item, so we have added these to the inventory, as well. The Item Number for these is FSIS-70, Unit of Issue is BX100 (Box of 100), and the Description is "Knuckle Bandages". Thanks to the inspectors at Est. 244, IBP Inc, in Storm Lake, IA, for bringing this need to our attention on a Customer Feedback Form.

VEHICLES

Annual Notice To High-Mileage Drivers

by Brian McNiff

*Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4221*

According to FSIS Notice 7-00, dated 4/12/00 (Annual Notice To High Mileage Drivers) all employees driving their POV (Privately Owned Vehicle) or a GOV (Government Owned Vehicle) more than 800 miles per month are required to

complete FSIS Form 3800-2. These commitments were due in this office on May 15, 2000. A review of our records indicated that several employees have not submitted their annual commitments to this office as required. All employees who are driving a government vehicle and wish to continue to drive the vehicle are required to complete the FSIS Form 3800-2 and sign section B in the appropriate signature block. Failure to submit their FY 2001 commitment may result in loss of their authorization to drive a government vehicle.

We have received a high volume of requests for government vehicles for FY 2001. These requests will be processed in a timely matter, however, due to the high volume of requests and GSA's budget limitations, the lead time for vehicle assignments in certain cities could exceed six months. Due to GSA's Budget process, we are required to submit FY 2001 requests for vehicles in the early part of the summer. This is why it is imperative for us to receive your requests by May 15th annually.

All drivers who commit to drive or commit to continue to drive a government vehicle must meet the following requirements:

(a) Must meet the high mileage requirement of 800 miles per month or have written approval from their District Manager justifying the use of a government vehicle for low mileage use.

(b) Work assignments must consist of a multi-plant assignment with varying travel patterns. In no case can a government vehicle be used for a one-plant assignment.

(c) Personnel driving government vehicles on rotation assignments may not use the government vehicle when he or she rotates into a one-plant assignment for daily commuting to and from work.

As a reminder, if you have not submitted your Form FSIS 3800-2, please forward the completed form to this office as soon as possible.

Send your commitment to:

USDA, FSIS, OM, ASD
ATTENTION: BRIAN MCNIFF
5601 SUNNYSIDE AVE - 2L-190-D
BELTSVILLE, MD 20705-5230

Unmarked Government Vehicles

by Pete Bridgeman

*Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4222*

At the last Alameda, Boulder, Minneapolis, and Salem Safety and Health Committee meeting held in Portland, OR, the subject of having Government tags and markings removed from GSA-leased vehicles and replaced with State tags was discussed. Provided here are the current regulations pertaining to this issue.

The regulation on government vehicle identification is contained in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 41, Part 102-34.105, "Identifying and Registering Motor Vehicles - Motor Vehicle Identification." This regulation states that "All motor vehicles owned or leased by the Government must display government identification unless exempted under Part 102-34.180 (Limited Exemptions), 102-34.190 (Unlimited Exemptions) or 102-34.195 (Special Exemptions)".

Unlimited exemptions are granted for agencies and programs involved in investigative or law enforcement activities. This regulation authorizes the use of state license plates on vehicles used in conjunction with our Regulatory Program and driven by Compliance Officers. When we request vehicles for this program, we request that the Government Plates and all government markings be removed from the vehicle. The cost for the state registration of such

vehicles comes out of the District's budget.

Special exemptions are only for use of the President of the United States and the heads of executive departments.

Limited exemptions require a certification stating either:

- (a) That the motor vehicle is used primarily for investigative, law enforcement or intelligence duties involving security activities and that identifying the motor vehicle would interfere with those duties; or
- (b) That identifying the motor vehicle would endanger the security of the vehicle occupants.

Requests under (b) above must include a justification documenting any life-threatening or safety-related concerns the driver has, along with any examples that warrant the concern.

A limited exemption may last from one day up to one year, depending on the circumstances warranting the exemption. If the requirement for exemption still exists at the end of one year, a continued exemption must be recertified at that time.

Requests for limited exemptions under this provision must be submitted in writing to this office (see address below), with the following information included:

1. A description of the duties that mandate the use of an unidentified government vehicle.
2. Reasons why the use of an unidentified government vehicle is essential.
3. Any life-threatening and/or safety-related reasons for the driver to require an unidentified government vehicle.
4. District Manager's concurrence with request.

This office will review the requests, and if warranted under the

provisions above, will grant the limited exemption for up to one year and notify the driver, GSA, and the District Manager of this exemption. You will be notified of the procedure to follow to obtain the State Tags.

Address to send requests to:

USDA, FSIS, OM, ASD
ATTENTION: BRIAN MCNIFF
5601 SUNNYSIDE AVE - 2L-190-D
BELTSVILLE, MD 20705-5230

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

FSIS Air Contaminants Program

by Laurie Segna

Administrative Services Division

Telephone: 301-504-4249

Occupational exposure limits are air quality values that apply to workplace exposures. These values have been developed by studying the correlation between the amount of a toxic substance absorbed by the body and the effects on worker health. They are based on industrial experience, animal toxicity studies, and human sensory response. In general, these limits represent concentrations below which it is believed, that nearly all workers may be repeatedly exposed, day after day without adverse health effects.

Last month's article introduced the Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs). The PELs are regulatory limits which have been established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). If an air sampling survey shows that employee exposures are below the PELs, then the workplace is considered to be in compliance with the federal occupational health standards.

Since their adoption in the early 1970's however, the PELs have undergone few changes and have not been updated to reflect new toxicological or health effects

information. Therefore, an additional set of limits, the Threshold Limit Values (TLVs), is also commonly used by industrial hygienists for conducting workplace exposure evaluations. The TLVs are recommended good practice guidelines which are published by the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH). These limits are periodically reviewed and revised according to newly available information. Therefore, the TLV for a given chemical may differ from the PEL, and in many cases may be lower or more restrictive.

For example, the current OSHA PEL for chlorine is 1.0 parts per million (ppm) regulated as a ceiling concentration (not to be exceeded at any time). The recommended TLV for chlorine however, is 0.5 ppm as an 8-hour time weighted average (generally, the exposure averaged over a typical full workshift) with a short term exposure limit (15 minutes) of 1.0 ppm. In evaluating an occupational exposure to chlorine, it is common to compare air sampling results to all three values, and both PELs and TLVs will usually be provided on a Material Safety Data Sheet for the chemical.

In summary, it is important to understand and consider both sets of limits for conducting an industrial hygiene evaluation. TLVs are commonly referenced as the current, "state of the art" guidelines, while PELs must be used for determination of OSHA violations.

Hazard Communication Program List of Hazardous Chemicals

by Tom Wright

Administrative Services Division

Telephone: 301-504-4246

Q: The Agency no longer requires the IIC or supervisor to maintain a list of approved chemicals used at an establishment. How does this revision affect maintaining a list of hazardous chemicals as required by Occupational Safety and Health

Administration's (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard and FSIS Directive 4791.6, Hazard Communication Program?

A: While the Food Safety and Inspection Service may no longer require a list, the OSHA standard and the FSIS Hazard Communication directive have not changed. The plant and the IIC or supervisor must maintain an up-to-date listing of the hazardous chemicals brought into the plant and provide each other with a current list of the chemicals. In other words, the FSIS inspection program change did not supersede the OSHA requirements. The bottom line—maintain that list of hazardous chemicals.

2000 Multi-District Safety and Health Poster Contest

*by Roger Bates, Chairperson
Chicago, Des Moines, Madison, and
Pickerington Multi-District Safety
and Health Committee
Office of Field Operations
Telephone: 319-262-2231*

The Multi-District Safety and Health Committee for the Chicago, Des Moines, Madison and Pickerington Districts is pleased to announce this year's safety and health poster contest. The poster's message should focus on promoting a safe and healthful environment.

Contest Procedures

Entries are to be in black and white on 8 1/2 x 11 inch plain paper. Posters must be in the landscape (horizontal or wide) format. Entrants must be permanent full-time employees of the Chicago, Des Moines, Madison or Pickerington Districts. Entries are limited to one submittal per employee and must be received at the address listed below by the close of business August 31, 2000. The employee's name,

district, and circuit (if applicable) must be on the back of the poster.

Send your poster to:

Tom Wright
Safety and Occupational Health
Manager
USDA, FSIS, ASD, EHSB
Mail Drop 5250
5601 Sunnyside Avenue
Beltsville, MD 20705-5250

The Committee will select three winning posters from each district at its September meeting. Each winner must be an FSIS employee at the time of selection. The 1st prize winner from each district will receive a one day time-off award and one selection of his/her choice from Group III of the Catalog For Non-Monetary Award Items. The 2nd prize winner from each district will receive one selection of his/her choice from Group II of the Catalog. The 3rd prize winner from each district will receive one selection of his/her choice from Group I of the Catalog. The 12 winning posters will be reproduced in a 2001 calendar that will be distributed to employees in the respective districts. *Award winning posters are wanted immediately!*

ISSUANCES

Recent Agency Issuances

*by Corinne Calhoun
Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4233*

The following notices and directives have been issued since the June 2000 edition of the *Beacon*. Many recent issuances are available in an electronic format from the "PCDIALS" library in Opendedesk and from the "Agency Issuances" public folder in the Exchange mail system (Outlook).

Notice 17-00 (5/23/00)
Reimbursement Procedures for
Government Vehicle Expenses

Notice 18-00 (5/31/00)
Honor Award Recipients – 2000

Notice 19-00 (6/2/00)
Relocation of the Executive
Management Staff, Office of the
Administrator

Notice 20-00 (6/7/00)
Field Operations Merit Award for
Excellence Recipients for 1999

Directive 1090.1, Revision 2
(6/9/00)
Management Controls

Directive 9000.1, Amendment 1
(6/14/00)
Export Certification

Directives and notices are
distributed automatically to
applicable Agency employees and
offices. Additional copies are
available from:

USDA FSIS ASD P&DS
MAILDROP 5241
5601 SUNNYSIDE AVENUE
BELTSVILLE MD 20705-5241

Telephone: 301-504-4242
Fax: 301-504-4277

**To comment on this newsletter or
to submit an article for
publication, please contact:**

**Kevin Dressman
Editor, *The Beacon*
USDA, FSIS, OM
Mail Drop 5250
5601 Sunnyside Avenue
Beltsville, MD 20705-5250
Tel: 301-504-4247
Fax: 301-504-4275
kevin.dressman@usda.gov**

The current and past editions of *The Beacon* are available electronically on the FSIS OpenDesk and Exchange mail systems as well as on the FSIS Website at: www.fsis.usda.gov/om/adserv.htm

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ATTACHMENT 1



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

Washington, DC
20250

July 18, 2000

TO: All Employees

**FROM: Thomas J. Billy
Administrator**

SUBJECT: HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project

On June 30, 2000, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled against USDA in a case challenging our authority to conduct the HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project (HIMP), as currently designed. The HIMP, which extends preventive HACCP concepts to the slaughter process, is directed at improving food safety and consumer protection. The first volunteer plant began operating under HIMP in October 1999, and currently, 26 plants are participating.

The Appeals Court has sent the case back to the U.S. District Court for further consideration. The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia had ruled in September 1999 that USDA did have the authority to conduct the pilot project, as designed.

I realize that many FSIS employees may have questions about the impact of this decision on the project. Therefore, I want to clarify that, until further notice, I expect all FSIS employees involved in the HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project (HIMP) to continue their assigned duties in the project. I expect all FSIS managers and supervisors to share this information with the employees they supervise and to post it if feasible. Employees directly involved in the project will be notified immediately if the status changes.

Preliminary results from the project show that from both a food safety and food quality standpoint, HIMP appears to be an improvement over traditional inspection. For example, for two categories of defects in poultry that are considered food safety related because they could pose a food safety hazard to consumers, improvements have been documented. For the first category, which includes septicemia and toxemia, the new system led to a 100 percent reduction in defects. For the second food safety category, which includes fecal contamination, defects were reduced by 92 percent. For the five categories addressing conditions that do not pose a food safety hazard to consumers, improvements were documented in all but one area.

Given that fact, I have directed FSIS staff to explore every possibility, either through the litigation or some other avenue, for keeping the project going. I remain convinced that we are headed in the right direction and, therefore, am in total disagreement with the court's ruling.

Many FSIS employees have competed for and received temporary promotions for their work in the HACCP Models project. Those employees will continue in their temporary promotions until options for continuing the project have been exhausted.

We have received supportive feedback on the project from many FSIS employees, most consumer groups, and industry.

For updates on the status of the HIMP project and other key issues, see the weekly *Thursday Report* and the monthly *Beacon*.

ATTACHMENT 2

2000 *Beacon* Reader Survey

Dear *Beacon* Reader:

Since the first edition of the *Beacon* in June of 1997, the Office of Management has used this monthly publication to provide timely news and information to all FSIS employees. This survey is your opportunity to provide us with your feedback on how well we've performed and offer your suggestions for improvement. After completing the survey, please return it using the post-paid self-mailer by August 31st. Thank you for your support of the *Beacon*.

Kevin Dressman, Editor

1. Listed below are the columns frequently published in the *Beacon*. On a scale of 1 to 3, please rate each area according to its relevance to your work assignment (1 = not useful; 2 = somewhat useful; 3 = very useful):

<input type="checkbox"/> Ron's Corner	<input type="checkbox"/> Internal Controls
<input type="checkbox"/> Workforce of the Future	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Safety and Health
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Civil Rights
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel
<input type="checkbox"/> Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> Issuances
<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/> Procurement
<input type="checkbox"/> Forms Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary Dispute Resolution Program (VDIP)

2. What is your favorite section of the *Beacon*? _____

3. What other news or information would you like to regularly see in the *Beacon*?

4. Do you feel the length of the individual articles in the *Beacon* are:

Too long Too brief Just right

5. Do you feel the length of the entire newsletter is:

Too long Too brief Just right

6. How you regularly obtain the *Beacon*?

Paper copy mailed to me Outlook Public Folder
FSIS Website

7. What is the 5-digit zipcode of your duty station? _____

8. Please provide any additional comments about the quality or content of the *Beacon*:

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USDA FSIS ASD
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY BRANCH
MAILDROP 5250
5601 SUNNYSIDE AVE
BELTSVILLE MD 20797-0547



ATTACHMENT 3

C, F, and G Fund Monthly Returns
June 8, 2000

Months	C Fund	S&P 500 Stock Index	F Fund	Lehman Brothers U.S. Aggregate Bond Index	G Fund
1995 (Jan. - Dec.)	37.41%	37.58%	18.31%	18.47%	7.03%
1996 (Jan. - Dec.)	22.85%	22.96%	3.66%	3.63%	6.76%
1997 (Jan. - Dec.)	33.17%	33.36%	9.60%	9.65%	6.77%
1998 (Jan. - Dec.)	28.44%	28.58%	8.70%	8.69%	5.74%
1999 (Jan. - Dec.)	20.95%	21.04%	(0.85%)	(0.82%)	5.99%
1999	%	%	%	%	%
April	3.86	3.87	.29	.32	.46
May	(2.36)	(2.36)	(0.89)	(0.88)	.47
June	5.54	5.55	(0.33)	(0.32)	.49
July	(3.14)	(3.12)	(0.43)	(0.42)	.52
August	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.05)	(0.05)	.53
September	(2.78)	(2.74)	1.15	1.16	.51
October	6.34	6.33	.38	.37	.53
November	2.00	2.03	(0.01)	(0.01)	.51
December	5.90	5.89	(0.45)	(0.48)	.54
2000					
January	(5.03)	(5.02)	(0.34)	(0.33)	.56
February	(1.93)	(1.89)	1.22	1.21	.53
March	9.74	9.78	1.32	1.32	.55
April	(2.98)	(3.01)	(0.29)	(0.29)	.52
May	(2.05)	(2.05)	(0.03)	(0.05)	.54
Last 12 Months *	10.35	10.48	2.15	2.11	6.50

Percentages in () are negative.

The C Fund is invested in the Barclays Equity Index Fund which tracks the S&P 500 stock index. The F Fund is invested in the Barclays U.S. Debt Index Fund which tracks the Lehman Brothers U.S. Aggregate bond index. The G Fund is invested in special issues of U.S. Treasury securities.

The monthly C, F, and G Fund returns represent net earnings for the month, after deduction of accrued administrative expenses. The C and F Fund returns also reflect the deduction of trading costs and accrued investment management fees.

The C, F, and G Fund monthly returns are dollar-weighted: they reflect net earnings on the changing balances invested during the month.

*** The C, F, and G Fund returns for the last twelve months assume, except for the crediting of earnings, unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month and assume earnings are compounded on a monthly basis.**

The C and F Fund returns vary from the index returns because of C and F Fund expenses, changing balances in the C and F Funds, and differences in returns between the Barclays funds and the underlying indexes. The index returns are time-weighted: they assume constant dollar balances invested during each month and throughout the period.

Future performance of the three funds will vary and may be significantly different from the returns shown above. See the "Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan" for detailed information about the funds and their investment risks.